Shadows and Sunbeams.

BY AGNES NEALE.

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SHADOWS

AND

SUNBEAMS

BY

AGNES NEALE.

Adelaide:

SCRYMGOUR AND SONS, PRINTERS, KING WILLIAM STREET.

1893.

For dear Mrs Murray

From Rosalie

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Preface.

CAROLINE AGNES LEANE, whose well-known *nom de plume*, "Agnes Neale," is still retained on the title page of this collection of her poems, was a native of the parish of Sheviock, Cornwall. When she was only three years old her parents arrived in South Australia. During the greater part of her youth the family resided in the Gumeracha district. Here the love of nature, that appears so frequently in her poems, was developed. Like many another writer, it was sorrow that awoke the poetic gift. Death claimed a sister, then her father, and again another sister. Each fresh blow seemed to rouse more fully her power of song. Her soul found relief in poetry, and the help she had realized she desired to give to others. About three years ago a selection of her poems was published in a small volume. This was soon out of print, and a wide desire being felt for republication, the opportunity has been taken to add a few of her other poems to the selection made by herself, and to correct some errata that marred the previous issue.

"Agnes Neale" has been justly called the Adelaide Procter of South Australia. The spirit of sadness sustained by true piety marks her writings chiefly; but that she could write cheerfully, and hopefully, many of her poems plainly show. To a true gift of poetic expression there was joined unusual power of thought, while a delicate sensitiveness to natural beauty appears in many of her poems.

After a long period of ill health and great suffering, she ceased to live and work on September 22, 1892.

This little volume needs no commendation to those who knew her, and to others it is presented as a contribution to Australia's collection of song, in which it may find its own place as true poetry, suffused with the spirit of piety and hope.

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Shadows and Sunbeams.

Christ.

A HOPE shone through the dark,
A smile of love,
And straightway golden floods of gladness gushed
From God above.

A star gleamed in the night,
A fair white star,
And on its rays sweet Peace came floating down
From realms afar.

A sun rose o'er the world ;
Then fled the night,
And sin's vile growth of rank pollution shrank
From his clear light.

Hope, star, and sun are One,
One at whose nod
Creation shrivels like a parchment scroll,
Or heaven welcomes back a ransomed soul :
The Christ of God.

Show us the Father.

The scene was closing. Christ had gathered round Him
His chosen ones, His well-beloved band,
Those who from out the nation He had gathered,
His witnesses to all the world to stand.
And they had listened to his loving teachings,
Had heard the words that fell from lips divine ;
Had seen the wonders that His hand was working,
Had seen the glory round about Him shine ;
And somewhat they believed in Him, whose word
Had stilled the tempest, as the tempest's Lord.

And yet some doubt with their belief was mingled,
In spite of their strong faith in what they saw ;
They could not comprehend God's fullest meaning—
They could not reconcile the fact with law ;
Because the matter passed their understanding
They could not give unhesitating trust ;
Doubt, like a ghastly hydra-headed monster,
Himself into the conclave boldly thrust ;
And one of the disciples reasoned thus—
"Show us the Father—it sufficeth us."

Are there no Philips in this generation ?
No cavilling questioners, who needs must see
The reason why for every fact and figure ?
Why this should come to pass, and that should be ?
Are there no gropers in the mist and darkness,
Trusting to leaders blinder than themselves,

Who think to grasp and hold the God of all things,
And lay him, fossil-wise, on dusty shelves ;
Who, all impatient, ever murmur thus—
"Show us the Father—it sufficeth us."

"Show us the Father." Would that sight suffice them ?
If they could view the Godhead's essence pure ;
If that undreamed-of burst of awful splendor
The shrinking eyes of mortals could endure ;
Would they be wiser for the sight vouchsafed them ?
Would they be happier for the answered prayers ?
Would not some disappointment lurk in hiding,
And sting them, adder-like, all unawares ?
And would they not, in mingled rage and pain,
Renew the quest, and speak the doubt again ?

Aye ; for they would not know what they were seeing,
Might e'en be frightened at the sight they saw ;
This would not be the God that they were seeking,
But some strange combinations of fixed law,
Some strange and subtle mingling of the gases,
Some unknown fusion of great Nature's powers,
Whereby she works in all her varied branches,
Bursting in sunshine, budding in fair flowers ;
Still they would wander, weary worn and faint—
"Show us the Father" still their wretched plaint.

So up and down the earth they ever wander,
Seeking but never finding peace or rest ;
Looking to comprehend a God—who cannot
Explain the mystery in their own breast.

O blind! oh, worse than blind to earth's best beauty!
Who fail to draw from all one thought sublime.
All that we need to know of God lies round us,
The rest He will reveal in His due time—
All but one manifested sight of Him,
In view of which the rest grows faint and dim.

And so we, too, cry out, "Show us the Father."
We make the prayer in faith with lifted hands
Toward the land of light where "The beloved"
Girded with light as with a garment stands.
"Show us the Father" in the man of sorrows:
The face more marred by grief than any man's;
"Show us the Father," for we need that vision
Ere we can comprehend Salvation's plans:
Show us Thyself, O Jesus! not in part,
For Thou the fulness of the Godhead art!

Unto You is Born a Saviour.

The sky has grown white with the kiss of the dawning,
And bright o'er the hills breaks the glorious morn,
And round the wide world peals the anthem of angels—
A Saviour, a Saviour is born!

Is born to bring beauty where beauty has faded,
And light to the lives of all loveliness shorn;
For the sinning, the suffering, creation all over
A Saviour, a Saviour is born!

A Saviour is born! Let the wonderful tidings
Like rivers of crystal and fountains of light
Flow on and gush forth, till the glow of their shining
Shall banish the gloom of the night.

Till the waves of their purity cleanse from all vileness
The beautiful earth where a Saviour has trod,
And make it at length, in the last of the ages,
A temple for ever of God.

Gush forth and flow onward, O fountain and river!
Gush forth and flow onward, till seasons shall cease;
Till the farthest recess of the farthest creation
Is glad with the gospel of peace.

All glory to God! for earth's darkness is dying,
And bright o'er the hills breaks the glorious morn;
And round the wide world peals the anthem of angels—
A Saviour, a Saviour is born!

In Everything Give Thanks.

In everything give thanks? What, when the daylight
Has faded from the dark and angry skies?
When the fair fabric of our life is shattered,
And round our feet in shapeless ruins lies?

In everything give thanks? What, when the midnight
Has opened wide her jaws of death and gloom,
And closed on all the beauty of our springtime,
When in the dark we fight and find no room?

What, when the love that most we loved and trusted,
Like broken reeds has pierced and wounded sore ;
When wide black seas of pain stretch blank and hopeless,
Where all was summer beauty just before ?

What, when the King of Gloom, with icy fingers,
Has frozen our beloved in our sight,
When one, so lately full of hope and promise,
Lies in some darkened chamber, still and white ?

When all we love has ceased to live and love us,
Has passed for evermore from mortal ken ?
When wealth, and hope, and love, and friends desert us,
In everything must we be thankful then ?

In everything give thanks. God knows each trial,
He feels each pang we never can express ;
He sees us puzzled at life's endless riddle,
And reads the answer we could never guess.

In everything give thanks. From out the darkness
Shall dawn a brighter day than that now done ;
A fairer fabric, built on sure foundations,
Shall shine all glorious in to-morrow's sun.

A spring more beautiful than last year brought us
Shall next year crown our heads with living bloom,
And in the golden glory we shall wonder
What could so long have wrapped our souls in gloom.

A better love than that which has betrayed us
Shall one day bless us with excess of light ;
There shall be no more sea, no waste of blackness,
But golden, glorious day, that knows no night.

In everything give thanks ; for life, for dying,
Because our lost beloved are not dead ;
They have but changed the seeming for the real ;
They do but follow where the Master led.

All that are true, all that have really loved us,
Are waiting for us on the other side ;
They did but pass a portal, fair and stately,
To wider living, when we thought they died.

In everything give thanks ; because we know not
What is the best, so all things may be best ;
In everything give thanks, and He who loves us,
In His great tenderness will rule the rest.

My Cross.

Someone, stooping through the starlight,
At my feet, laid down a cross,
And I bent me low to lift it,
Feeling I had suffered loss.

Loss of all that seemed most lovely,
Loss of all that looked most fair ;
Oh ! I cared not for the freshness
Of the fragrant, dewy air.

So I raised it slowly, sadly,
Bore it, walking wearily ;
And the awful hours that followed,
Drunk with anguish seemed to be.

Tired limbs that scarce could stagger
'Neath that crushing weight of dread;
I was as the living, fettered
Helpless, to the leaden dead.

All my heart was ice within me,
All the sky was steel above;
With that thing of dread upon me,
Could I—could I dream of love?

Love of earth, and love of heaven,
Mockery alike to me—
Bowed as I was, I could nothing
But the rocks I trod on see.

Did God see me in the darkness,
Feel the words I never said,
See the feet all torn and bleeding,
See the weary, drooping head?

Someone touched me in mine anguish,
And the darkness turned to light;
Someone touched my hideous burden,
Changed it to my wondering sight.

And I took it, took it slowly,
Laid it gently on my breast,
And, through all my soul, upgushing
Sprang exhaustless founts of rest.

All my dead flowers blossomed newly,
Blossomed with a lovelier grace;
All the golden sunshine kissed me,
As I raised to heaven my face.

Still a cross—but oh ! how altered !
  Still a burden to be borne ;
Still, yes sometimes, weary footsteps,
  Made with feet all bruised and torn.

What the difference ?—nothing, only
  God to be my guide and friend ;
This the difference—Jesus with me,
  Always, ever, to life's end.

The Poet and the Raindrop.

On a dull and sombre day
A single raindrop lay
Quite hidden from the world,
Close in a green leaf curled.

In silence, one by one,
Its fellows all had gone.
Poor drop ! thus left alone,
What could it do but moan ?

"What good am I," it said,
"Hid in this dark green bed ?
Why did I leave my cloud,
Only to find a shroud ?

"What good, what good am I ?
True, I can see the sky—
Dear sky ! that never more
I shall be wafted o'er.

"Dear sky, that held me so;
How gladly would I go
Back to your garnered mist
That the day-king has kissed.

"Dear mists, that in sweet shame
Blushed to a rosy flame,
And spread your wings of light
To gladden human sight.

"Ah! that indeed was life—
That elemental strife—
When every wind-tossed cloud
Echoed the thunders loud.

"But now, what can I do?"
Just then the sun glanced through,
Just then a tiny breeze
Breathed through the quiet trees.

Sun-kissed, the drop of rain
Smiled into life again;
A rainbow, small but fine,
In its clear globe did shine;

And, shaken by the breeze,
It left the green old trees
And dropped, a blessing mute,
Straight to a dead flower root.

The root stirred in its bed,
"Sweet visitant," it said,
"Just that I want you give;
Through you, indeed, I live."

Up to the golden day
It pushed its silent way,
And stood in beauty there
A blossom wondrous fair.
And so, not all in vain,
Fell that one drop of rain.

. . . .

On a fair summer day
A poet musing lay.
Flooded with golden light,
The poet dwelt in night.

"Why do I live," he said;
Ah! sure, if I were dead
Scarce one would drop a tear
Above my silent bier.

"No heart would yearn for me,
No life would darkened be,
No breast would swell with pain
Though I came not again.

"Could I but move the world,
Could some dart I had hurl'd
Pierce through man's selfishness,
Make sin's black tide flow less;

"Could I some lost soul save,
Give freedom to some slave;
Could I but beat the drum
And bid the nation come

To see a world, through me,
Made beautiful and free !

" That were to live indeed,
Could I but do some deed—
Some deed that would resound
The wide creation round !"

Poor poet ! All in vain,
Just like the drop of rain ;
No great thing came to do,
And yet the sun shone through.

A single song he wrote,
A single heart it smote.
Ah ! who shall ever say
What good was done that day ?

From bloom and heart was shed
Love's perfume perfected ;
And only God can say
What good was done that day.

What Manner of Men ought We to Be ?

" What manner of men ought we to be ?"
The grand old pagan philosopher asked
Of those who in Athen's palmiest days
In the light of her civilization basked.
" If, when the soul and the body shall part,
Death shall not be death to the spirit too ;

If there *should* be life beyond this life,
Existence beyond the world that we view,
In the face of a *chance* futurity,
What manner of men ought we to be ?

" Should we only think to please ourselves ?
Should we live our lives as the dogs do theirs ?
What do we mean by our crowd of gods ?
What do we mean by our priests and our prayers ?
Was life meant only for self and lust,
Or was it not meant for a higher end ?
Are we not drawing upon our heads
The judgment the gods will surely send ?
In the light of a world we cannot see
What manner of men ought we to be ?"

He lived in a darker age than ours,
Before the dawn of the light of truth,
Ere the glorious Sun of Righteousness
Had pierced with His shining earth's wrong and ruth.
We live in the blaze of a gospel day :
In the broad noontide of salvation's light ;
But to us there will also come the gloom,
And the silent shadows of death and night.
In the face of that awful mystery,
What manner of men ought we to be ?

In the mist and dark of the early time,
Ere the dawn had scattered the shades of night,
Like the sound of a trumpet battle call
His question rang out on the side of right.

And down and down through the changing years
That question waits for our answer still,
And low in the depths of man's secret soul
Its echoes are ling'ring and ever will.
If there *is* a life that we cannot see,
What manner of men ought we to be?

We live our lives of folly and sin,
We are eating husks instead of the grain;
Refusing gifts of a gracious God
That long at our doors have neglected lain.
If each day lived is one less to live,
If our human life is held by a thread;
If only *one* step is the distance set
Between the two worlds of the quick and dead,
In the prospect of immortality
What manner of men ought we to be?

We *know* there is life beyond this life;
We *know* there's a future beyond us set
When the founts and streams of this mortal life
In eternity's shoreless sea have met,
When all time's bound'ries are swept away,
When the conqueror's wreath crowns the victor's brow,
When *past* and *future* of time shall be
All resolved into one eternal *now*;
In view of that grand reality,
What manner of men ought we to be?

Pure, as the Master Himself was pure,
And true as the truth that our God has giv'n,

With hearts that are fresh as the morning dew,
And clear as the sky when the clouds are riven,
Our lives should be fair as the early day,
Our souls should be white, as the snow-flakes are ;
In the face of the future, every man
Should shine in earth's moral sky as a star :
In the light of God's great eternity,
This manner of men we ought to be !

No God.

"*The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.*"—DAVID.

Is there no God ? Go out upon the ocean
When the storm-king strikes with his angry fist
The tiny rippling waves of blue and purple,
That lately gentlest zephyrs swept and kissed.

See His wild racers shaking off their bridles,
And tossing their white manes in fury high,
As in their madness they would burst all bound'ries,
Flinging defiance at the lowering sky.

But, over all, above the wrack and riot,
Above the wreck of ships and treasures lost,
Above the howling, shrieking rage and turmoil
Of maddened waves by angry winds uptossed,

A word falls like a star from out the heavens,
Only a whisper, still and soft and low ;
Only a whisper, but a word Almighty—
"Thus far, no further, shall thy proud waves go,"

And all the racers, in their might and fury,
Feel the strong hand that checks the bridle rein ;
And cowed, and beaten back, with angry moanings,
They slowly sink to peace and rest again.

Is there no God ? Go track the midnight splendor,
Look up from earth, poor offspring of earth's sod ;
Go, trace those countless worlds in all their windings,
And then say, if you dare, "There is no God !"

Who wrought the brilliant glory of the heavens ?
Who with unrivalled skill, unwearied care,
Created all those worlds of wondrous beauty,
And then with matchless patience set them there ?

Who gave to each its own appointed orbit ?
Who through the network's vast intricacies
Worked with an eye so keen, a touch so faultless,
That not one single world its way should miss ?

Ages and ages have passed dimly o'er us,
The earth, then young, has now grown old and grey,
And yet the bright perfection of their order
Has never yet been marred in any way.

Still do the stars march on their nightly journey,
The planets show themselves like points of light ;
Still is the old command observed unbroken—
"The sun shall rule by day, the moon by night."

O wondrous pageant of majestic beauty !
O fields unlimited, by man untrod !
Ye utter no uncertain voice, but loudly
Declare in clearest tones, "There *is* a God !"

Is there no God? Go lift the slender harebell,
The modest daisy, and the primrose pale;
The queenly rose, the tiny shrinking violet
That hides itself in every shady vale.

Dissect one flower, and mark the slender twinings
Of veins and arteries in each petal fair;
View well the whole, the delicate perfection,
Work and design alike are perfect there.

There is no flaw or failure. All is beauty;
Beauty without one blemish or one stain;
The lovely blossoms bear no spot of earth-soil,
Though in the earth so long the germ has lain.

No God! Go walk the forest in its beauty;
Pace up and down those leafy emerald aisles,
Where on the soft cold carpet spread beneath you
The golden sunbeams dance in flickering smiles.

Here's a cathedral nobler far than any
That man has reared through eighteen hundred years;
Its living roof waves in the summer breezes,
Kissed by the sun, washed by night's balmy tears.

Here stretch long dreamy aisles of solemn beauty—
Chancel and transept, pillar'd walls, and dome,
Artistically far more proud and stately
Than any sculpture found in Greece or Rome.

And in the night, when the star-lamps are burning,
And God has breathed his silence on men's hearts,
When the winds sob and wail their *miserere*,
And every leaf to quivering music starts.

See where the lightning blazes through the heavens,
Cleaving the black cloud as with flaming sword !
Hear how the raging thunders roar and bellow,
Their pealing praises to the thunder's Lord.

There is no God ! Who reared that wondrous temple,
That noble stately structure we call man ?
Who bade him live, and multiply, and conquer,
When the first era of our time began ?

Who wrought that curious frame of bone and muscle,
And fashioned every part with faultless skill ?
Till man burst from His hand, a thing all perfect,
And instinct with the power to do and will !

There is no God ! Who gave the eye its beauty ?
Who caused the wonder of the subtle brain ?
Who made that complex mesh of nerves and fibres
By which we laugh for joy or weep for pain ?

" There is no God !" the fool keeps on repeating,
Did man then spring to something out of nought ?
Was there no force, no over-mastering power,
That to perfection earth's first wonder brought ?

There *is* a God ! Each time we love we own it,
For love could owe its birth to God alone ;
There *is* a God our breaking hearts acknowledge
When under grief's fierce lash our spirits moan.

There *is* a God ! Throughout the vast creation,
From realms and regions man has never trod ;
From rolling planet worlds, and highest heavens,
Bursts forth one voice— " Ye fools, there *is* a God !"

Glory to God.

"GLORY to God!" the angel hosts unnumbered
Swell the glad peau, the triumphant song;
The grand united choir of heaven rejoices,
Floods of celestial music sweep along.

"Glory to God!" ye angels, shout it louder!
"Glory to God!" mortals, take up the strain;
"Glory to God!" the notes rise fuller, stronger,
Till all the world shall hear, and sing "Amen."

"Glory to God!" our hearts stand still with wonder,
We bow in awe before our Father's face;
"Glory to God!" for His great love and mercy,
Love that could still love such a fallen race.

"And peace on earth!" no longer war and bloodshed,
No longer sin's dark train of crime and woe;
The serpent's trail shall blot our earth no longer,
And Paradise shall be restored below.

The living Peace, the incarnated Saviour,
The Lord of heaven, the mortal Son of Man;
We cannot comprehend the depth and fulness,
The matchless fulness of redemption's plan.

But "Peace on earth!" this is the promise given,
And this we hold to gladly, trustingly;
We know that He who promised will be faithful,
And "Peace on earth" most surely yet shall be.

"Goodwill to men!" a message sweet from heaven
The Lord Almighty sends to earth this day;
He throws aside the rod and grasps the sceptre,
And "Peace on earth" the choral angels say.

"Peace and goodwill!" how softly falls the echo
From those far ages on our listening ears;
Despite his foes, Christ shall be all triumphant,
And peace shall crown the bright millennial years.

"Peace" and the Christ! O Lord, our hearts are swelling,
Filled with glad rapture, filled with love to Thee:
The warring of our nature's calmed and silent,
Our hearts drawn heavenward by this ecstasy.

Tarry Ye Here.

TARRY ye here, for darkly round me gathers
The storm my soul has hardly strength to meet;
Tarry ye here and watch, while I go yonder,
Power to endure and conquer, to entreat;
Tarry ye here; into my night of anguish
No soul can enter with me; I must be
Alone with God, alone to fight this battle,
Whose awful rage and conflict none may see:
My soul is sorrowful, exceeding so,
Even to death; and yet I needs must go.

Tarry ye here and watch. I lay not on you
A burden which your weakness cannot bear;

Tarry ye here and watch, 'tis all I ask you,
  But one short hour while I am pleading there.
Tarry ye here, while on my shrinking spirit
  Are poured the vials of the wrath Divine ;
What is the agony of all the ages
  In its deep pain to this one hour of mine ?
What is the sorrow of all time to this,
From which I wring a world redeeming bliss !

Ye are my friends ; through these last blessed seasons
  Ye have been with me ever, day and night ;
My pity for the suffering ye have witnessed,
  All that I did was done within your sight,
The works I did have not been done in darkness,
  But in the light and blaze of open day,
And ye have seen how at my touch and bidding
  Pain, sin, and sorrow, all have fled away.
Your eyes have seen the dawn of glorious light
That yet shall banish every shade of night.

Think not, because the skies with clouds are hidden,
  That my life's sun has really set in gloom ;
Think not because my mortal flesh may fail me
  That my life's work has ended in the tomb.
Think not that failure stamps my glorious mission,
  That God denies the justice of my claim ;
I am, in very truth, God's well-beloved,
  From all to all eternity the same.
And God shall vindicate most gloriously
My every word, as ye shall one day see.

Ye are my witnesses ; to you are given
The keys of heaven, unlock them and fling wide
The pearly gates, that all who will may enter
And learn that for all men a God has died.
Unlock the gates of heaven, through the power
Of that one word, to all who will believe,
Send the glad message pealing round creation,
For all who come to me I will receive.
And ye the truth, triumphant, yet shall see
Sweep o'er the world, unchecked, resistlessly.

Ye shall behold me all victorious, worshipped
As Lord and king of all beneath the skies ;
To me, from every tongue in every nation,
Anthems of praise shall ceaselessly arise.
The offering of a world's devoted homage
Shall rise as costly incense pure and sweet ;
Crowns and dominions shall be gladly tendered
A willing sacrifice before my feet.
I—I shall reign, the universe my realm,
And righteousness all evil shall o'erwhelm.

But now, the thunders of God's awful anger
Crash fiercely round me ; in this darkest hour
The forces of all evil whelm my spirit ;
'Tis Satan's hour of triumph and of power,
And I must drink it to its bitter drainings
The brimming winecup of the wrath of God.
This the supremest of the woes uncounted,
That crowd the path my weary feet have trod.

One only can excel this hour of pain,
Then death itself shall by my death be slain !

But now my soul is sorrowful and stricken,
  The bitterness of death is at my lips ;
Failure seems written over all my mission,
  My life is shrouded in a black eclipse.
Exceeding sorrowful ! no human spirit
  Such sorrow as I drink could bear to taste ;
My soul seems banished from all other beings,
  Driven by the spirit in a boundless waste—
A desert waste, where every thought is anguish,
  Where moans of pain are borne on every breath ;
Sunk in a soundless sea of woe most bitter—
  Exceeding sorrowful, e'en unto death.
My failing soul longs for love's sympathy,
Tarry ye here and watch one hour with me.

My Lessons.

And you have learned ? Yes, I have learned
  To take the bitter with the sweet,
To know that thorns and roses lie
  Together underneath our feet.

And you have learned ? Yes, I have learned
  That round each storm-cloud's sombre fold
Is drawn, invisible, perhaps,
  But surely drawn, a line of gold.

And you have learned? Yes, I have learned
That disappointments of to-day
May turn to blessings rich and rare
Some time, not very far away.

And you have learned? Yes, I have learned
To lay the best-loved task aside,
To see some other take my place,
And still in patience to abide.

And you have learned? Yes, I have learned
God always sits the fire beside;
That he who rules the furnace heat
Knows when the gold is purified.

And you have learned? Yes, I have learned
Temptations make us closer cling;
And seek more oft our hiding place,
Beneath the shadow of His wing.

And you have learned? Yes, I have learned
Of pleasant pastures, still and sweet,
Where silently I wait in peace,
Low at my dear Redeemer's feet.

And you have learned? Yes, I have learned
That what we count as keenest loss
Is richest gain, could we but see
The shining crown above the cross.

And you have learned? Yes, I have learned
That in all things God knoweth best;
And, held in His Almighty hand,
In sweet content I wait and rest.

We Wait for Light.

Up from the world, sunk in the depths of darkness,
  Up to the cold arch of the far blue sky,
Up from sad hearts that groan in pain and anguish,
  There rises ever the same woful cry.
The wail rings on through all the passing ages,
  Millions of voices blent in one sad moan,
Swaying around the footstool of the Godhead,
  Threatening to take by force the Great White Throne.
"Amid the awful blackness of the night,
  We wait for light, Great God; we wait for light."

Like children, sobbing in the gloom of midnight,
  With weak hands vainly beating in the dark,
With trembling hearts, all sore from bitter weeping,
  We strain our eyes in vain for one glad spark.
We are afraid—our lips grow pale with horror,
  Through the cold veins the slow blood will not flow,
And sometimes, overmastered by our anguish,
  We sink beneath our crushing weight of woe;
And still our shaking lips, all stiff and white,
Breathe out that woful cry—We wait for light!

We know not what we fear; our hearts our haunted
  By shapeless phantoms moving through the gloom;
Our hands are ever grasping after shadows;
  The air seems full of whispered words of doom;
If we could see—if but the light would glimmer
  And show the pathway that our feet must tread;

Could we but know if that the forms that haunt us
  Are the lov'd living or the nameless dead ;
If but, athwart the darkness of our night,
Would fall the glory of the golden light.

Our feet seem ever slipping o'er abysses,
  Down whose dark yawning depths we dare not gaze.
Oh ! if the light would only shine around us
  The glorious splendor of the noontide blaze !
Our souls are sick with dread of unknown dangers ;
  We sink o'erwhelmed beneath a black despair ;
We have no strength to fight, no heart to struggle ;
  We would seek help, but know not how or where.
In thicker darkness than Egyptian night
We wait, in shuddering horror, for the light.

The sky is grey, without one rift across it ;
  The earth is sodden with the heavy rain—
Has spring's glad beauty died and been forgotten ?
  Has summer's splendid glory blazed in vain ?
Have our departed gone away for ever ?
  Where are they now, the lost belovéd dead ?
In what vast soul-realms are they waiting for us ?
  What pathway did their spirit footsteps tread ?
We cannot tell, but somewhere, far from night,
Their souls are bathed in God's eternal light.

Are theirs the forms we dimly see around us ?
  Are theirs the hands that touch us through the gloom ?
Are theirs the words that come in whispers to us
  Across the solemn stillness of the tomb ?

If we but knew that these were our beloved,
We should not cry in such heart-broken way ;
If we but knew that they were round about us,
Then should we know we were not far from day.
For somewhere near our lov'd ones must be light ;
Have they not gone for ever from the night ?

Yes, somewhere, somewhere far across the hilltops
The golden day is waiting to be born ;
What if the blackness of the night is round us ?
The darkest hour is just before the morn !
And presently from out the sky above us
Will fall the daylight like a white-winged bird,
And we shall know, beyond all doubt or question,
That every frantic prayer for light was heard ;
Aye, we shall know it when the realm of night
Is flooded, lost, in God's great sea of light.

The Best Crown.

The sunset had faded in flashes of splendor,
And twilight's soft shadows were veiling the skies,
When down from the stars dropped the spirit of slumber
And laid her cool touch on my light-wearied eyes.

And, lo ! I had taken a journey to starland,
Where, wand'ring lights flame on their measureless flight,

And I saw as I gazed in bewilderment round me,
I had taken my stand in the court of the night.

And before me, spread out as it were for approval,
Lay crowns that were glitt'ring like circlets of light;
Their rays were caught up and flung back like a rainbow,
And dazzled with splendor my wondering sight.

Then the queen of the night spoke in accents as silvery
As her own lovely beams when they fall from the sky,
And lie like a dream on the blossom-strewn meadows,
Or whiten the space where the lake waters lie.

"See, mortal," she cried, and the glittering treasures
Were touched by her long slender fingers of light,
"One crown of these three shall be thine for the wearing,
But which, must be chosen forever to-night.

"Here is Wealth," and the diamonds that flashed in her holding
Were lying deep down in their sockets of gold;
"The wearer of this shall be lord of his fellows,
Before him the world's proudest portals unfold.

"Here is Fame." Ah! the chaplet was fair to my seeing,
With its leaves and its blossoms of purple and red.
"The fame of the wearer of this lives for ever;
His name is undying," the silver voice said.

"Here is Honor and Duty," the queen whispered softly
And lifting the crown added never a word;
While the stars seemed to pause and stand still for my choosing,
'Mid a silence so deep it might almost be heard!

I turned from the Crown on her finger with loathing,
For sure, such a thing was by mortal ne'er worn ;
It was clumsy and rough, with no leaflet or blossom,
And twisted all rudely with briar and thorn.

I lifted the circlet of Wealth ; but, oh ! horror,
The gems turned to blood drops, the diamonds to tears ;
Its gold, like a glittering serpent, entwined me,
And crushed all the light from the slow weary years.

I took up the chaplet of Fame, but its laurels
Were turned into dust, and lay crushed in my hand—
"If my name must be written for ever in ashes,
'Twere surely as well it were written in sand !"

"Give me Honor and Duty !" I cried ; and oh ! wonder,
The rough dingy crown was all changed to my sight ;
Fresh leaves, set with diamonds for dewdrops, clung round it,
The sharp cruel thorns burst in blossoms of light.

. . . . . .

Then with a deep drawn sigh my sleep was broken ;
And through my dream I knew that God had spoken.

Tell Us Now.

LORD, we, at Thy footstool bending,
Breathe our humble prayer to Thee,
Asking Thee, in love and mercy,
All our countless needs to see.

Grant the wants which Thou canst grant,
Give the good for which we pant !

All our hearts are filled with longings,
  Longings that we cannot tell ;
Yearnings, passionate and painful,
  Deep within our spirits dwell :
All the seething, wild unrest
Of the ocean's troubled breast.

Are we Thine ? our sad lips question,
  Hardly daring to believe ;
Have we missed the way, unknowing ?—
  Lord, Thou only canst relieve ;
Thou alone canst let us know
Whether we are Thine or no.

Send us down a living answer,
  Bend in mercy from Thy throne !
Lord, we will accept that answer
  From Thy lips, and Thine alone.
Lo ! for light we wait and pray,
Send us not unblessed away.

If our hopes are all unfounded,
  If we are not Thine indeed ;
Lo ! in Thine own name, we pray Thee,
  By Thy sufferings, Lord, we plead.
As we at Thy footstool bow,
Tell us, Jesus, tell us now !

Send us not away uncertain,
  Speak Thy answer to our call ;

Thine own lips have bid us seek Thee,
By that word we stand or fall.
By the thorns that crowned Thy brow,
Tell us, Jesus, tell us now.

But if we indeed have found Thee,
If our hands have grasped the rock
Whose foundation, sure and steadfast,
Dares defy hell's fiercest shock,
Let Thy answer through each soul
Like celestial music roll.

Let the glory of the knowledge
Lie about us, like the light ;
Let rare glimpses of Thy glory
Burst upon our ravished sight ;
O'er the tempests of our will
Speak Thy magic, "Peace, be still !"

Tell us by the flowers that blossom,
Tell us by the stars of night,
Bid us read it in the darkness,
Bid us find it in the light ;
As we at Thy footstool bow,
Tell us, Jesus, tell us now !

Touch our lips with holy incense,
Make our hearts Thy lovely shrine ;
Speak the word that leaves us stainless,
Every wish subdued to Thine ;
Every thought conformed to Thee,
Thine alone, eternally !

May Be.

THERE was a time when memory meant for us
Only the promise of another day ;
When every night was bright with golden stars,
Made brighter by the splendid Milky Way.
We had no Past, our lives were all "to be"—
Were all to be in such a glorious wise—
Life was rose colored, dew was diamonds then,
And every flower a jewel in our eyes.

The world was all an Eden, fair and wide—
An Eden with no serpent's ghastly trail ;
Our Eves and Adams all were sinless, pure ;
And not one hope of ours could ever fail ;
Truth lived in every being that we met,
And friendship was God's best and dearest gift.
Oh ! youth's illusions, fairer than the morn !
If but the future's veil might never lift.

Are we the happier that we have more room ?
Are we the nobler that our faith is dead ?
The spring must die e'er harvest is, you say,
And the fruit comes not till the bloom is shed.
It may be ; yet some blossoms leave no fruit
Because the rough winds smite them down too soon ;
They lie in drifted heaps, unsightly, sere,
Beneath the glory of the harvest moon.

Oh ! give us back the hopes that once were ours,
Oh ! give us back the faith our childhood knew ;

We want life's hawthorn and its sweet wild rose,
We care not for its laurel and its rue.
Oh! is there nothing left of all the Past,
Of those dead lovely hours our eyes have seen?
Oh! Past, oh! Present—Future—is there nought
To fill the aching void of "might have been?"

Through the still Past's lone halls of emptiness
I hear the ghostly feet of dead joys creep;
Beside the graves of hopes that once we loved
The long slow train of mourners come to weep.
The Past is dead, and withered are its flowers,
No mortal hand can give them life again;
So surely dead that to remember it
The very effort is almost in vain.

The Present?—Well, we try to bear our cross,
Try to be brave, amid life's care and pain;
But every day we see some blossom fall—
Our path each morn is cumbered with the slain.
The Past, the Present, hold for us no light,
No gladness that our hearts may rest upon;
We read the Present ever by the Past,
And in that lurid light we stumble on.

Is there nought anywhere? no joy to be
Wrung from the hard, stern destiny we feel
Grinding our hearts to powder with its weight,
Breaking us slowly on its dreadful wheel?
Is there nought anywhere? does God not hear?
Must this salt rain of tears for ever fall?

Must the earth's blended cry of agony—
Her million voices—rise unheeded all?

No; for God sits in heaven, and round His feet
Wheel the slow cycles of eternity;
And through the universe no sparrow falls
Uncared for by the Eyes that all things see.
The Past may be but as an empty tomb,
That echoes to the footsteps of the dead;
The Present, haunted by sad memories
Trooping through heart and brain with ghostly tread.

But from the Future comes a word of Peace,
A thought that bids us "suffer and be strong."
Because the light is darkened for to-day,
Think not it will be darkened very long.

It may be that the Future holds in store
A glorious recompense for every loss;
May be that, hidden 'neath her lovely veil,
She holds a shining crown for every cross;
It may be that the fruit our hands have missed
May ripen sweetly under brighter skies;
It may be that a fairer morning dawn
Shall cheer our darkness with its splendid eyes.

It may be that a glorious flood of light
Our eyes at sunset even yet may see.
The Future holds all possibilities;
And, oh! thank God, life's glory yet may be.

Oh ! the rich promise of that hidden time,
The boundless scope of each divine "may be,"
Includes all hope, gives to us all of heaven,
Its pearly gates, gold streets, and jasper sea.

Good-bye !

"Good-bye" (God be with you), to friend or lover
No dearer word of parting can be spoken,
No truer blessing mortal lips can utter,
Ere the sweet chain of intercourse is broken.

Surely there are no words so filled with sweetness,
So fraught with love, from loving hearts up-springing ;
We speak them lightly when our hearts are gladdest,
When the sun shines, and when the birds are singing.

"Good-bye" (God be with you), our white lips murmur,
As we, with breaking hearts, bend o'er the dying ;
"Good-bye, good-bye !" we sob out in our anguish
Above the grave where all we love is lying.

We speak the words in times of joy or sorrow ;
"Good-bye" we whisper when our souls are starting
On that long journey to the land of daytime,
Where there is no "good-bye," and no more parting.

General Gordon:

The Hero of Khartoum.

Let the muffled drums be beaten,
Let the funeral bell toll slow,
For a great man, strong and steadfast,
For a hero lying low.

For a brave, a saintly Christian,
True to man, and true to God;
Not a shadow of dishonor
Lies along the path he trod.

Not upon the field of battle,
Not amidst its din and gloom,
Crack of rifle, roar of cannon,
Fell the hero of Khartoum.

Maybe we had mourned less deeply
Had he fallen where foemen fled,
Or in the breach, dark hordes resisting,
Had been numbered with the dead.

Yet, he was not less a hero,
That some traitor's coward blow,
All unarmed, and unresisting,
Laid the dauntless soldier low.

Was he hero? Witness, China;
Witness, Afric's burning strand?
Answer all the years of struggle
Wasted in that dreary land.

Was he hero? Were they wasted?
God, who sees the sparrows fly,
Saw His steadfast servant working,
Saw his faith and courage high.

He, whose curse in fire is written
O'er the trade in human blood,
Saw where in the cause of freedom
Freedom's noblest soldier stood.

Was he hero? Go and question
Those whose lives, downbeat and dumb,
By his hand were raised and rescued
From a city's foulest slum.

Think of that sad year of waiting,
Think of all the nameless dread,
Ever gathering thicker, darker,
Round that brave devoted head.

Think of that last day, most mournful
Of the whole sad mournful year,
When our hero perished, helpless,
And the longed-for help so near.

Aye, he was, in truth, a hero,
One whose work the world should sway;
Making all men stronger, truer,
Down to time's remotest day.

Let his deed in light be written
On the scroll of deathless fame;
Let the soldier's future watchword
Be the sound of Gordon's name.

Not alone does England mourn him,
We, her children leal and true,
Claim with her the traitor's victim,
Mourn him as our hero too.

Let the round world join to mourn him
Whom we were too late to save ;
Let a nation's love and sorrow
Wail this requiem o'er his grave :

Farewell, Gordon ! saintly, fearless !
Not farewell in doubt or gloom,
But assured, 'tis better with thee ;
Farewell, hero of Khartoum !

My Treasures.

When the sky was rose and golden
On a dewy morn in spring,
Came a dove with eyes of azure,
Golden crest and snowy wing.

And she nestled closely to me,
Laid her head upon my breast,
Folded her white wings, and softly
Sank within my arms to rest.

And the spring days passed unheeded,
And the summer blazed and died ;
But I noticed not, nor cared not,
For the splendor far and wide.

Then the winter settled coldly,
And my dove shook out her wings,
While I felt the fierce sharp anguish
That life's first dark shadow brings.

Vain my hope and vain my struggles—
O my dove with starry eyes!
Well I know thy snowy pinions
Bore thee safe beyond the skies.

In my garden, in the sunshine,
Bloomed a lovely pearly rose;
Lovely always, but most lovely
At the morn or evening's close.

Just a tiny, pearly rosebud,
And I fancied, in my pride,
Surely never fairer blossom
Bloomed in all earth's garden wide.

But one day my rosebud faded,
All its pearly fairness fled;
All day long it drooped still lower,
Lower hung the lovely head.

Day by day I watched it wither,
Day by day I hoped and prayed;
All my hopes and prayers availed not—
To my rose there came no aid.

After nights of anxious watching,
After days of weary care,
Came a hand that drew my rosebud
Up to purer light and air.

Bird and blossom, I am waiting
  Till the evening shadows fall ;
Till I hear the tones celestial
  Through the silver twilight call.

Then, with life's day safely ended,
  Fled all weariness and pain,
I shall find my vanished treasures—
  Dove and rosebud—once again.

Bud that blossomed for my pleasure,
  Snowy dove with golden crest,
Growing in a fairer garden,
  Nestling in a warmer nest.

What Might Have Been.

To every life some disappointment comes,
  Each heart some grief holds sacredly its own ;
All lips have closed above some secret pain,
  Some sorrow they have breathed to God alone.

No human barque has ever sailed life's sea
  That did not at the outset spread her sails,
Looking for Hope's bright sun to gild the way
  And Love to speed her on with genial gales.

And none have ever reached the other side,
  Who, looking back across the stretch of years,
Have failed to find, however smooth the way,
  That love and joy were less than pain and tears.

And each heart looking at some special spot,
Some point in life most clear to memory's ken,
Has sighed to think of all that might have been
If only something had been different then!

If only disappointment had not come,
If friends had been the same the whole time through,
If those most trusted had not failed us most;
What might have been if they had but been true!

If love had but been all we thought it was,
And those we loved all that they seemed to be,
How much of joy we might have known on earth;
What might have been in crossing life's rough sea.

O broken trust! O weary wasted lives!
O hearts bowed down while yet life's tree is green!
Ye are not lonely; every human soul
Has mourned in secret for what might have been.

There is no life that has not some regret,
There are no eyes that sorrow have not seen:
We all have somewhat in the past to mourn;
We all cry wearily, "It might have been!"

And to the latest day of latest life,
"It might have been!" will be the soul's sad cry;
A grief that never will be ended quite
Till we with folded hands and still lips lie.

But, when we reach the dim far bound'ry line,
And our pale lips receive earth's latest kiss;
When all of life grows faint and indistinct,
Its grief or joy, its agony or bliss;

When our tired feet have crossed the silent stream,
And paced the bright sands on the other shore ;
When we have taken our last look of earth,
And all the pains that trouble us no more ;

When God has wiped away the latest tear,
And welcomed home His weary ones at last,
With all the happiness of heaven to come,
And all the griefs of earth for ever past ;

When we look through the pearly gates, and see
For what a world we are exchanging this,
We shall not grieve for all that might have been,
We shall be satisfied with all that is !

The First-Born of Egypt.

The sun went down behind the crimson west,
And, like a glittering stream of molten gold,
Watched by the pyramids, towards the sea
Proud Egypt's sacred river slowly rolled.

Night settled down ; but not like other nights :
No star gems sparkled from the far-off sky,
Even the breeze that kissed the rippling waves
Seemed murmuring strangely as it wandered by.

An awful darkness lay upon the earth—
A darkness black and thick, that might be felt,
Like the dense folds of some vast funeral pall,
Rested on all the land where Israel dwelt.

Did Egypt sleep in that most fearful hour
When the death-angel spread his wings for flight ?
Were there some hearts that felt not his approach ?
Did slumber rest upon the land that night ?

We know not. Men have slept in danger's hour,
Have lain with close-sealed lips and soft-drawn breath ;
And, all unconscious of the falling sword,
Have slept within the very arms of death.

And it may be that in the land that night
Some mother drew her darling to her breast,
And soothed him with her tender lullaby,
Though all unknowing, to his last long rest.

It may be that some fair young maiden closed
Her drooping eyelids, tired with joy's sweet pain ;
And, dreaming of her lover's last fond look,
Grew still and silent, ne'er to move again.

The hours wore on. Through all the land there came
The slow sad beat of wide cold wings outspread ;
And where the angel paused for one swift glance,
He turned away and left the silent dead.

All through the night dark wings swept to and fro,
All through the night cold hands touched lips life-warm ;
And manhood's strength and childhood's promise fair
Lay crushed like flowers torn by a winter's storm !

Then Egypt woke. With one convulsive start
She sprang to life and consciousness again ;
And up to God from stricken hearts there swelled
One long deep wail of human love and pain.

Well might the nation cry as with one voice ;
  Well might eyes turn in sickness from the light ;
God's breath had swept the land from end to end,
  And one in every house lay dead that night !

Some Grief Has Touched.

Some grief has touched you, yet I know not how
  To reach the hidden sorrow of your heart ;
  How can I help you, knowing but in part
The inner cause of that which clouds your brow ?

Yet I would fain lay on the hurt a touch
  Of gentle sympathy, of tender thought ;
  I know with how much power a touch is fraught.
Perhaps I ask, in friendship's name, too much ?

Can you not trust me in so slight a thing ?
  Know you the worth of friendship here below ?
  Its utmost value none can ever know ;
Its balm will draw from pain its keenest sting.

But this we know : God never gave to man
  A truer blessing from the stores above—
  The soul of sympathy, love's inner love—
So let me do for you what friendship can.

And dare I speak of that far better Friend,
  Whose love beyond all bound, all measure is ;
  Who fathomed life through sorrow's black abyss,
So that His sympathy might reach the end—

The very end, the last sad son of time ;
And touch, with that same touch which on that day
He touched the grave of Lazarus, where he lay,
And brought him back to life and manhood's prime ?

And yet He wept, though knowing well the end.
The sisters' agony of hope and fears
Brought to His eyes the sympathetic tears—
So we may grieve for others' grief, my friend.

By that dear touch of human sympathy
We feel our inmost souls drawn out to Him ;
The deep wells of our hearts fill to the brim
For Him who wept to see a mortal die.

He knows all sorrow ; every human woe,
All our temptations, have been felt by Him ;
His eyes with tears of anguish have been dim ;
He knows our griefs, as He alone can know.

So if I may not know the pain that lies
So heavily about you, take it there
To Him, who fain would all your sorrow share ;
Lay it before the Christ's all-loving eyes.

One Year Old.

One year old to-morrow,
Little stainless feet,
Set on life's rough pathway,
Dainty, fresh, and sweet.

One year old to-morrow ;
  Eyes so glad and bright,
Trying hard to fathom
  Every wondrous sight.

One year old to-morrow ;
  Tiny pink-hued hands
Holding all our heart-strings
  In love's slender bands.

Lips of dewy sweetness,
  Fresh as any flower,
Keeping all your secrets
  Till some golden hour.

Will the feet just started
  On the way of life
Some day faint and falter
  In the cruel strife ?

Will the eyes just opened
  Sometime, in long years,
Have their dancing gladness
  Drowned in bitter tears ?

Will those soft pink fingers
  Ever clasp in prayer
Those lips cannot utter,
  Sealed by dumb despair ?

Darling little rosebud,
  Fair and fresh and sweet,
God alone can guard you
  From the ills you meet !

Darling little sunbeam,
Dancing free and bright,
May God always fill you
With His own glad light !

One year old to-morrow ;
May God guard you, dear ;
Keep you pure and stainless
Through each coming year !

Good-Night !

Good-night ! Good-night ! The summer day is dying,
From the dim east the long grey shadows creep ;
The breezes whisper low among the tree-tops,
In the long grass the flowers have gone to sleep.

Good-night ! Good-night ! The sky is gold and crimson,
A royal couch for the fair dying day ;
Its fringes sweep the earth in rainbow glory,
And tinge with light the tall hills far away.

Good-night ! Good-night ! The evening star is lying,
A liquid diamond on the field of night ;
Melting and flashing in the rosy splendor,
Trembling as dewdrops tremble in the light.

Good-night ! Good-night ! The stars are out in myriads,
White points of light along the wide black sky ;
The earth is wrapped in darkness as a mantle,
And sad and slow the whispering winds sweep by.

Good-night! Good-night! The morn that breaks to-morrow
May dawn upon a brighter world than this,
May shine upon a land that knows no night-time,
Bend down and give me, love, your good-night kiss.

One kiss before I close my eyes in slumber,
Tired eyes, already longing for the light;
Perhaps, who knows, my dreams may be the brighter;
So, one last kiss! Good-night, my love, good-night!

The Evening Star.

FAR away beyond the sunset,
Where the shadows come and go,
There a silver star of promise
In the western sky hung low.

Tremulous and soft its splendor,
Melting in the liquid blue,
Like a dewdrop on a rose-leaf
When the sun shines redly through.

All around the glory faded,
As the setting sun went down;
Over all the hills and valleys
Fell the shadows still and brown.

But around that star of promise
Linger'd still a rosy flush,
As the early mists of morning
At the sun's warm kisses blush.

Then the rosy flush all faded,
Calm and cold the heavens grew;
Still the silver star of promise
Trembled in the distant blue.

Other lights came out and sparkled,
But to me none were as fair
As that star that in the sunset
Trembled in the evening air—

Star of hope and star of promise,
Like a glittering point of light,
Ever shining clearer, brighter,
As the evening sinks in night.

So, there is no night all darkness,
So, there is no life all gloom;
So, along the roughest pathway
Love's bright flower will one day bloom.

So, some star is ever shining
Till night's sable flag is furled,
Till the white wings of the morning
Brood above the sleeping world.

Come Unto Me.

Oh, Lethe! have thy fabled waters vanished?
And is there left us no forgetfulness?
No sweet oblivion's dreamless deeps of stillness,
Our weary brains and burdened hearts to bless?

Come back, come back to us, O magic river!
And steep our senses in thy soothing waves;
Send us a silence that shall lap our being,
Profound and soundless as the deepest graves.

Our souls are weary with life's constant moaning;
Our hearts are aching with life's cruel pain;
Time's hopes delusions are and baseless visions,
Unsatisfying, mocking all, and vain.

No grain of all its good, so highly vaunted,
Is worth the surer evil that it brings;
And joy is always drowned in seas of weeping,
And sorrow close to gladness ever clings.

Oh, Lethe, Lethe! hast thou fled for ever?
And is thy dreamless fount for ever sealed!
Are earth and heaven alike, cold and uncaring,
Against the crying of their children steeled.

Oh! must we ever search in vain for friendship?
Comes there no ending to our fruitless quest?
Is there no strength whereon our souls reposing
May find exchange for toil in blessed rest?

The friends we trusted most they most have failed us;
Those we believed most true are falsest shown;
Words do but mock us, promises are empty,
Sunless and meaningless all life has grown.

Is there no respite from Time's gnawing anguish,
And no nepenthe from life's bitter woe?
No mighty hand whose touch so soft, so tender,
Can check the blinding floods of tears that flow?

Oh, souls grown weary with your search for friendship,
Oh, hearts grown bitter in your fruitless quest,
List to the voice that sweeps along the ages—
"Come unto me, and I will give you rest!"

Only within His arms can we find shelter,
And consolation in His love alone;
All truth, all purity, and, oh! all friendship,
Comes from our taking from the Great White Throne.

Forgiveness.

WHY look you grave, why shake your head?
He wronged me sore, you say—
'Twas yesterday when that was done,
And now it is to-day.

Another eve, another morn
Has swept around the world;
And on the golden brow of eve
God's banners lay unfurled.

And from the solemn, bending sky
The dew has fallen free,
With its soft rain it washed all stain
From off the earth and me.

And shall I then, shall I to whom
The Lord forgave so much,
Let even one soul turn away
Without a pardoning touch?

Nay, when God's mercy rounds the world
And sweeps the universe,
Shall I alone with weary moan
Lie underneath His curse?

Lie underneath His curse, because,
Though He might let me live,
And let me live beneath His smile,
My soul would not forgive?

Go, let the dewdrops bathe your soul
As they have flowed o'er mine;
And let the daisies teach you this—
Forgiveness is divine.

And then forget that yesterday
Some wrong was done to you;
Think of the eyes that saw time's birth
And looks creation through.

God sits in majesty serene
On heaven's eternal hill;
He rules the whole wide universe,
And He forgives us still.

Why should I hold an angry thought
Because a wrong was done?
I pray to God no sin of mine
May see to-morrow's sun.

So what was done me yesterday,
To-day I cannot find;
God says the sins that I have done
His love has cast behind.

The sweet dew-rain of peace and prayer
  Has washed that grief away ;
See through the golden gates of eve
  Fades out another day.

Friends No Longer.

(These words were set to music by Mr. S. Milbourn, Jun.)

Friends no longer ; is it true or seeming ?
  Has the silken cord, then, parted quite ?
Friends no longer ; are our souls but dreaming ?
  Friends no longer—did we hear aright ?
Is the tie between us quite, quite broken ;
  Is the gulf too wide, too deep, to pass ;
Are the words irrevocably spoken,
  Will the gathered storm-clouds never pass ?

Friends no longer ; yet the wattles blooming
  Hang their golden balls to greet the light ;
But I only hear the wind's sad moaning,
  Only see the shadows of the night.

Only yesterday we were not parted,
  Now to-day we stand so wide apart ;
I was proud, the salt tears never started,
  Though the words you uttered wrung my heart.
Shall we ever bridge the awful distance,
  Yawning now our severed ways between,
Or go onward still in blind persistence—
  Will things never be as they have been ?

Friends no longer; oh! I think that never
Were such words of bitter anguish said,
When in sorrow our farewell was spoken,
All life's hope and all life's joy fell dead.

Villanelle.

They are golden and purple and red,
There are blossoms all over the ground,
And the winter of dead things is dead;

The spring to the summer is wed,
Fair garlands lie scattered around;
They are golden and purple and red.

The magpie is warbling instead,
Where the wild winds no longer resound,
And the winter of dead things is dead.

Bright Flora's rich treasures are shed,
O'er valley and hillock and mound;
They are golden and purple and red.

Mourn not for the years that are fled,
For the years that have passed without sound,
For the winter of dead things is dead;

And blossom to blossom has led
Through life in a beautiful sound;
They are golden and purple and red,
And the winter of dead things is dead.

I Thirst: A Song.

For the light of love on my onward way,
For the sunshine fair of the cloudless day,
For the flowers that blossom out to the light,
For the stars that shine in the darkest night,
For hope, like a silken clue, to be
A guide through earth's tangled maze to me—
I thirst! I thirst!

For the gushing fountain's music sweet,
For beauty and gladness my eyes to greet,
For the satisfied fulness of deep content,
For the rest that to weary ones is sent,
Up to the far-off blue of the sky
Rings ever and ever the desolate cry—
I thirst! I thirst!

For love, that shall make my whole world bright;
That shall fill my days with a glorious light;
That, wrapping my soul in a dream of joy,
Shall give me gladness without alloy;
That to me shall be stars, and sun, and flowers,
And a wondrous charm to the golden hours—
I thirst! I thirst!

But there never shines on my weary way,
From the sun of Love, one gladsome ray.
The star of hope on my life has set,
Leaving naught but an aching vain regret.
And, lifting mine eyes to the starless sky,
My heart still moans forth its wailing cry—
I thirst! I thirst!

Parted.

In the glow of the crimson eve
Two were walking and whispering together ;
Over their heads the glad birds flew,
Singing their songs in the summer weather.

Blossoms growing beneath their feet,
Up through the long green grass were gleaming ;
Their silver bells like fairy cups
With the sunset glory o'er them streaming.

Two in the silver, sweet moonlight,
Looked at the stars in the far off heaven,
Thinking that since the sun went down
A brighter glow to the sky was given.

Two were happy and glad at heart,
Over the dewy blossoms roaming ;
Two were bathed in the light of love,
In the grey of the summer gloaming.

. . . . .

In the gloom of the winter eve
Two are walking widely asunder,
From the lowering sky o'erhead
Flash the lightnings and rolls the thunder.

Under their feet the flowers lie dead,
The tree-tops droop with their weight of weeping ;
Even the birds have hid their heads,
Their silent watch 'mid wild storms keeping.

Earth is wrapped in a shroud of mist,
The silver moon her face is hiding,
Only gleaming out now and then
To watch the stealthy shadows gliding.

In the gloom of the solemn night,
Two have murmured "farewell" for ever;
Two will walk in the light of love,
Glad in its glow again, ah! never.

A Song.

In the morning—oh, the morning!
Lovely with a thousand hues,
Born of light the shades defying,
Jewelled o'er with flashing dews.
In the morning flowers were blooming,
In the morning all was fair,
Birds and hopes their bright wings trying
In the sunlit scented air.
Every rose its face uplifted
In the morning fresh and sweet,
Every blossom, beauty gifted,
Smiled the rosy morn to greet.

When the noontide—oh, the noontide!
Trod the earth with shining feet,
And the hours were full of silence,
Heavy with excess of sweet,
Then the flowers poured forth their breathings
In a perfumed, sudden flow;

Birds and hopes contented floating
On bright pinions to and fro.
Every rose its face uplifted
In the glorious day-god's light ;
Every blossom, beauty gifted,
Swam in floods of golden light.

In the night time—oh, the night-time !
When the beauty all was o'er,
And the glory of the sunlight
Streamed upon the earth no more.
In the night-time, winds came wailing,
In the night-time came the rain ;
Birds and hopes alike were sleeping,
Never more to wake again.
And the lovely roses lifted
Never more each drooping head ;
Every blossom, beauty gifted,
In the storm lay drowned and dead.

My Lady and I.

My lady sat in her garden bower,
Queen of the queenliest rose was she,
Fairest lily of lilies fair,
Loveliest flower of earth to me.
Not the daisies that kissed the sod,
Not sweetest violets bathed in dew,
Not even the stately hyacinth,
Or the sweet forget-me-not's steadfast blue

Are half as lovely as she I love ;
  Are half as bright as her starry eyes,
Where the light of truth in their warm depth glows
  Like the golden sun in the noontide skies.

My lady is slender, and fair, and tall,
  And we love each other, my darling and I ;
And we never think in her garden bower
  Of the winter time when the roses die.
We live in the summer, my lady and I,
  Where the birds are singing the whole day through ;
And we care not even if storms should come—
  Storms cannot hurt us while we are true.
What if the roses should fade away ?
  Or the glad bird notes should cease to ring ?
They will sing and blossom again we know
  In the golden light of another spring.

My lady lies in a solemn sleep—
  Whiter than loveliest lily she ;
Stainless and pure as the snowdrop pale
  Is the fairest flower of the earth to me.
The storms have come, but they could not hurt,
  We live in the summer, my lady and I—
She on the shores of the crystal sea,
  I in the thought of the days gone by.
What if our roses are faded and dead ?
  What if our birds should have ceased to sing ?
They will sing and blossom again, we know,
  In the golden light of eternal spring.

Still My Darling.

Still my darling, still beloved!
Though the years are passing o'er;
Though the brightness of the past time
Shine around us never more.
Time is passing, life is fleeting;
Ah! how short the days appear;
Month to flying month is added,
Swiftly closes in the year.

Still my darling, still beloved!
When the spring is fair and sweet,
When the summer's glow of splendor
Autumn's golden glories meet;
When the winter winds are wailing,
When the storms rage fierce and wild,
Weary hours of grief and sadness
Are by thoughts of thee beguiled.

Still my darling, still beloved!
What though chance or absence fall,
What though even cold estrangement
Hang around us like a pall?
Even should thy love desert me—
And the future who can tell?—
Still my darling, my beloved,
Still my heart would love thee well!

Still my darling, still beloved!
At the closing of the day,

When the lamp of life shines faintly,
  When the hopes of life decay,
When the shadows of death's darkness
  Fall between this world and me,
Thou, my darling, my beloved
  Through eternity shall be!

Assist the Blind to Help Themselves:

An Appeal on Behalf of the Blind.

(The following lines were composed by "Agnes Neale," and read at an entertainment given in aid of the Trade Industrial School for the Blind, Friday evening, April 10, 1885.)

All things are lovely! all the world is glad,
  The humming-bird, that floats on jewelled wing,
The blossoms fair as pictured smiles of God,
  That in such crowds of dainty sweetness spring.

All things are glad, they sing for very joy;
  The music of all nature, sweet and strong,
Ceaselessly rises to the throne of God—
  The earth is girdled with a flood of song.

But through the full, triumphant burst of joy
  Do we not hear, again and yet again,
An undertone of saddest melody—
  The soft low sighing of unspoken pain?

What is that sigh that through earth's music breathes?
What is that moan earth's laughter cannot hide?
What pain unspoken 'mid the beauty dwells
Through all the world, so glorious, fair and wide?

Ah! there are those to whom the light of day
Means nothing but an idle, empty sound;
Who never watch the seasons in their course
Clothe earth with loveliness, the whole year round.

They never see the sunset splendors lie
In purple depths, and floods of crimson light;
They never see the stars like jewels shine
Along the dusky tresses of the night.

Pity the blind! Aye, for the Lord's dear sake,
Pity the souls so mournfully bereft;
Of all your blessings, which would you not give
To have that blessed gift of seeing left?

Pity the blind! Oh, listen to their cry,
Like Samson, wailing in his awful night;
Forever hidden from the glorious noon,
Forever banished from the lovely light.

No sun, no moon, no stars, no trees, no flowers,
No wide expanse of heaving, bounding wave;
For these, the beauty of the earth is not —
For these, all seeing lies beyond the grave!

List to their sighing through the weary days—
The days that hold, for them, no change from night;
List to their low sad moan of bitter pain—
A vocal shadow on the golden light.

"We never see the daylight that you love
Sweep through the gates of dawn, and flood the skies,
While in the growing white the morning star,
All tremulous with tender radiance lies.

"God help us! for we never saw a flower,
Beneath the kisses of the sun, expand
From the close-folded, green, unconscious bud
To the full blossom, stately, fair and grand.

"And all the sights of nature that you see:
Her moods and changes, April smiles and tears—
Her winter tempests and her summer blaze,
Her phases, old, yet new, through all the year.

"We never see—nothing but rayless night
Lies round about us, dreary, sad, forlorn;
One long, monotonous, unbroken gloom—
For us no shaded eve, no dewy morn."

I think, when Jesus walked the hills and plains
Of far Judea, and to Him were brought
The sick, the halt, the suffering of all kind,
And for their woe His help divine was sought,

I think He looked most tenderly on those
Who never had beheld the light of day,
Who from the beauty and the joy of earth
In starless darkness had been hid away.

I seem to see, e'en now, the Man Divine,
The human God, with God-like tenderness,
Touch the sealed eyes and bid the light flow in,
And with its gladness all their being bless.

And He was our example ; what He did
We too should try to do, as best we may ;
We cannot touch blind eyes and bid them see
The glorious splendor of the golden day.

God does not bid us work some miracle,
He claims no task from us beyond our might,
But only that our hands should ready be
To work as we should work within His sight

Help these to help themselves, we ask no more,
Give them the power by their own skill to live;
Bless these sad lives with interest like your own,
And light and gladness in their darkness give.

Teach them to work, so that man's truest good
May still be theirs, robbed of so much beside ;
Give them the power to live a useful life,
E'en though life's lovelinesss should be denied.

What though the work be lowly, so was Christ's,
And He has sanctified by His dear touch
All labor, be it of what kind it will—
Teach them to help themselves, it is not much.

It is not much to you whose lives are full
And glad with life's unutterable joy,
To teach these helpless hands some simple craft,
And in glad work their weary hours employ.

Not much to you, but all of life to them,
And more of need than you can ever know.
O Christians, did your Master come to you,
Would you indifference to His wishes show ?

Nay, surely, yet He comes to you e'en now,
As He has come so many times before ;
For His dear sake, oh ! give these what we ask,
Help them to help themselves—we ask no more.

What if our eyes were holden ? What if we
Could never more behold the light of day ?
What if the summer noontide's splendid blaze
Could pierce our blackness with no golden ray ?

God only makes us differ, God alone ;
And just as they are we ourselves might be ;
God might bend down towards us any day
And touch our eyes, and bid us no more see !

We are but human, too, so for the sake
Of dear humanity stretch forth your hand
To help as best you may the stricken ones,
Who all along life's wayside waiting stand.

Waiting for Jesus ! Waiting sad and still,
To hear the rush of countless, passing feet ;
Waiting until the multitude pass by,
And they shall feel His presence calm and sweet.

Waiting for Jesus ! Shall they wait in vain ?
Stricken with sorrow that no touch can heal ;
Or shall they in the help of loving hands
The blessed presence of the Master feel ?

Waiting for Jesus ! and He bids us go
And in His name soothe every grief and pain ;
We who the Master represent below.
Waiting for Jesus ! Shall they wait in vain ?

With the Angels.

My darling ! my beautiful darling !
So full of the glory of life—
So full of the splendor and sweetness
With which the strong sunshine is rife.

My darling ! my beautiful darling,
Than roses more dainty and sweet ;
Your eyes are as blue as the violets
That blossom in crowds at my feet.

And over your head is a glory,
A halo of rippling gold—
A mesh to entangle the sunbeams,
And their dazzling brightness to hold.

Your cheek is as red as a rosebud,
Your lips as ripe cherries are sweet,
You are lovely, my beautiful darling,
From the crown of your head to your feet.

Did you come from the angels, my darling ?
Did you come from the angels to me ?
Did they spread their white pinions and bear you,
My treasure and darling to be ?

O open your sweet lips and tell me,
O tell me the things you have seen
In the beautiful land that you came from,
The home where you always have been.

They have given me one of their number
To cherish, and care for, and love.
My babe is a blossom of beauty
From the garden of beauty above.

. . . . .

My darling ! my beautiful darling !
Oh ! why are you lying so still ?
So still that my heart stops its beating ;
My fingers are stiffened and chill.

You are lovely as moonlight, my darling,
But your cheek as a snowdrop is white ;
Your lips are all faded and hueless—
You are silent, my darling, to-night.

My baby ! my beautiful baby !
Have you gone to the angels from me ?
I thought you would stay with me always,
My darling and treasure to be.

They only had lent you, my darling,
And now they have borne you away,
Away on their broad shining pinions,
To the beautiful realms of the day.

My darling ! my beautiful darling !
Lie still, like a white rose at rest ;
I shall pillow your bright golden ringlets
No more on my warm loving breast.

If the angels had given you, darling,
They could not have called you again ;

And so I take hope in my sorrow,
And comfort is blended with pain.

I will lay the fair casket that held you
Away 'neath the sweet grassy sod—
My darling is gone with the angels,
My baby is gone back to God.

My Friend and I.

Two boats sailed out upon a summer sea
And met each other in the noontide light,
With all sails set to catch the lagging wind,
But idly flapping now, though fair and white.

Around them lay the rippling purple main,
Above them stretched a deep wide vault of blue,
That, as the golden hours slipped slowly by,
For ever deeper and yet deeper grew.

The sunlight lay along the shining waves,
And kissed the ripples into flecks of gold;
While all around, in ceaseless harmony,
The mighty anthem of the ocean rolled.

All day the bright waves kissed the dancing boats,
And kept them side by side through all the light,
Holding sweet counsel, closest intercourse
Till they had well nigh lost the thought of night.

They told each other of the emerald isles
Lying at rest on purple sunlit seas;

Of syrens' songs that oft the ears beguile ;
Of tropic calms, without one cooling breeze.

They told each other of the raging storms
That lash the waves to seething hills of foam ;
And how the sudden burst of angry squalls
Had wrecked full many a vessel bound for home.

But then a breeze sprang up and filled the sails,
And steadily the boats swept far apart,
Each guided by the hand that held the helm,
And following its own especial chart.

Through day and night, through sunshine and through storm,
Each steered its course across the heaving main ;
Each glad sometimes, and sometimes blind with tears ;
But on the sea they never met again.

'Till one glad day they knew their storms were o'er,
The haven reached, the anchors fairly cast,
With all the false enchantments left behind,
And all the perils of the journey past.

And then they knew that each by different ways
Had still been guided to the same calm bay,
That the same thought had ruled each vessel's course,
The same strong hand had steered them all the way.

. . . . .

So met my friend and I, on life's wide sea,
In the full fervid glow of noontide light,
And all around the rippling waves of life
Kissed by hope's sun were glittering golden bright.

We were so full of gladness, and our hearts
Were overflowing with the wine of joy ;
Although we knew that roses must have thorns—
Although we knew that gold must have alloy.

We held sweet counsel, told each other thoughts
That only God before had known we had ;
Sometimes our talk was filled with golden light,
Sometimes the words we spoke were pained and sad.

We held sweet counsel, whether grave or gay,
In joy's sweet sunshine, or in sorrow's gloom ;
We knew each other, faithful, tried, and true,
And I won strength for some fierce storms to come.

Just for a little, then we drew apart,
The currents of our lives flowed different ways ;
And in the night I sometimes turn my eyes
Back through long years to those sweet friendly days.

I turn my eyes with longing, for their light
Still sheds a radiance on each stormy day ;
I feel their warmth steal through the long cold years,
And know their good will never pass away.

And I thank God who gave me such a friend,
Who let me hold this wealth of earth's best love ;
True friendship is the sweetest sweet of life,
Earth's costliest gift, all other gifts above.

Seas roll between us now, and mountains rise ;
I think we shall not ever meet again ;
Not while our boats are tossed on life's rough tide—
Not on time's restless, ever-shifting main.

But I look forward to the blessed day
When, with furled sails and anchors safely cast,
We shall have reached the port where we would be,
And all our storms shall be forever past.

Then, with clasped hands, and eyes that see the truth,
Seeing each point in God's eternal light,
My friend and I will bless the Almighty hand
That always steered our fragile barks aright.

What is Life?

WHAT is Life?—'Tis joy and gladness,
Summer sunshine, sweet and bright;
Never thinking of the winter—
Never looking for the night.

What is Life?—'Tis hoping, loving,
Pouring out a full heart's store;
Not regretting so much given,
Only wishing there were more.

What is Life?—'Tis disappointment,
Keen despair, and anguish deep,
Pain and sorrow, and, so often,
Griefs for which we cannot weep.

What is Life?—'Tis doing, bearing,
Sometimes darkness, sometimes light;
Ever pressing onward, onward,
Always faith and never sight.

What is Life ?—O God, most holy !
'Tis Thy blessing, full and free ;
But a higher lesson still is—
Life is living unto Thee.

Let us learn that lesson bravely,
Bravely face earth's storms and strifes ;
Good is not in sunshine only,
Darkness sometimes sweetens life.

For we rest beneath the shadow
As we could not in the sun ;
And in resting, strength we gather
For the race we have to run.

But a nobler life lies yonder—
Yonder where no grief-storms rise,
Where no clouds shall ever darken
O'er our glory-lighted skies—

For beyond life's utmost portals,
Through the pearl and golden gates,
For each one who fights and conquers,
Love and life eternal waits.

Spring.

The earth is full of dancing life,
The rosy hours fleet by,
Bringing no shadow o'er the earth,
No cloud across the sky.

But one wide stainless vault of blue,
God's azure flag unfurled,
Whose centre is the golden sun,
Arches the laughing world.

Close in her heart the blushing rose
Her wealth of perfume folds;
And every tall white lily cup
A crystal diamond holds.

A thousand insects, jewel-winged,
Are glancing to and fro,
And in the sunlight and the wind
The scarlet poppies blow.

The birds are singing everywhere,
The streamlets flash and play;
All nature wears her fairest dress;
The earth is glad to-day.

Glad in the beauty of the light,
The glory of the sun;
The earth that for six thousand years
Her changeless course has run.

Glad in the glory of the sun,
The beauty of the light;
The earth that still is young and strong,
And beautiful and bright.

O song of birds! O dew-gemmed flowers!
O south winds sighing low!
We know not whence your breezes come,
We know not where they go.

We know not why the flowers should bloom,
Nor why the birds should sing;
We only know our hearts are glad
Because of lovely spring.

We only know our hearts are glad,
We glory in the light;
We love the time of birds and flowers,
And all things fair and bright.

The Sky is Blue.

The sky is blue, serenely calm and fair,
No cloud across its solemn arch is flying;
The winds breathe softly through the quivering leaves,
And on the hills the golden light is lying.

O sky! O sunlight! O soft whispering winds!
O earth arrayed in robes of mocking glory!
The sun still shines on piled up graves of hope;
The wandering winds still tell the same sad story;

And weary feet walk ever to and fro,
Caught in the maze of life's perplexing windings;
Each day some head goes down, some soul is crushed;
Each day some broken heart a grave is finding.

Nought but a grave; there is no joy on earth,
There comes no rest but what comes to the dying;
No perfect peace will ever glad our hearts
Till we with close sealed lids and lips are lying.

Adelaide: A Song.

O FAIR is our beautiful city,
As she lies her green meadows between,
In the light of the fresh summer dawning,
Like a pearl in an ocean of green!
As the morn's rosy rays kiss her steeples,
And her pinnacles fling back the light,
She is fair as a bride to her lover,
Arrayed in her garments of light.

O Adelaide! we who gaze on thee,
Entranced at thy loveliness stand;
O beautiful, beautiful city!
Sweet pearl of our bright southern land.

When the day-god has climed the meridian,
And flames on his hot noontide throne,
With a broad track of glory behind him
Where his mantle of light has been thrown,
Thy white garments flash in the sunlight,
Throwing back the warm rays to the skies,
Like a vision of rapturous beauty
That in scenes of enchantment arise.

O Adelaide! we who gaze on thee,
Entranced at thy loveliness stand;
O beautiful, beautiful city!
White pearl of this bright southern land.

And when nature lies fainting and breathless,
All tired with the kisses of light,
Asleep in the soft arms of evening
Ere yet it has deepened to night,
How fair shine thy churches and steeples—
How pure gleam thy white robes, O queen !
At rest on thy billowy meadows,
Like a pearl in an ocean of green.

O Adelaide ! we who gaze on thee,
Entranced at thy loveliness stand ;
O beautiful, beautiful city !
Fair pearl of our bright southern land.

But when night in her dark cloak enfolds thee,
And the stars burn in glory on high,
There cometh a moan from thy bosom
That quivereth up in the sky—
A moan from the hearts that are breaking
With sin and with sorrow crushed low,
For there's blood on thy white robes, O city !
Foul stains on thy garments of snow.

O Adelaide ! we who behold thee,
Aghast at thy guiltiness stand :
O sorrowful, crime-blotted city !
Stained pearl of our bright southern land.

Underneath the Daisies.

UNDERNEATH the daisies, will all pain and sorrow cease?
Will this aching void of longing unsatisfied be o'er?
Underneath the daisies, will my heart find rest and peace
In a calmness and a quiet to be broken never more?

I have longed for light and sunshine as the growing flowers long;
I have sought for love and sympathy, but always sought in vain.
There has been a troubled refrain that has run through every song,
And the bloom of every pleasure has held a sting of pain.

Underneath the daisies, will the refrain never sound?
Will the sting be drawn from pain, will the joy be what it ought?
Underneath the daisies, will true sympathy be found,
And love and light and sunshine never more be vainly sought?

Underneath the daisies—oh! it seems so much to me!
Underneath the daisies I will rest me and be still,
Where eyes can never hurt me, for their scorn I cannot see,
And where cruel words can never more my heart with anguish fill.

Underneath the daisies I shall be so glad to rest;
While above the pink-fringed watchers the solemn tree-tops nod,
I shall be safely sheltered with the One who loves me best—
For underneath the daisies means to be at home with God.

A Beautiful Thought.

A BEAUTIFUL thought there came to me
In the silent, shadowy night,
Lighting the darkness that round me lay
With a wonderful, radiant light.

For I thought of the dear ones who went away
In the years that are past and gone;
And I saw the old love-light shine once more
In the eyes that I looked upon.

And the delicate veil that is hanging between
The worlds of the living and dead,
Seemed all at once but a luminous mist,
By the light of eternity shed—

Seemed all at once to quiver and wave,
As stirred by a quick, warm breath;
And the world we call dead seemed the living world,
And the life that we lived seemed the death.

And I almost fancied I felt the touch
Of the dear hands lost long ago;
And the sound of their voices seemed borne to my brain
In a musical silvery flow.

Then this beautiful thought there came to me:
Suppose that the loved and lost
Had stayed this side of the river of death—
Had never its cold waters crossed;

But had only entered a larger life,
  Had tasted a goodlier bliss ;
Had feasted their eyes and their hearts on a world
  That is fairer and brighter than this.

And suppose that out from that beautiful land,
  Where the love and the light never dies,
They are gazing forever to watch our ways
  With their star-like and lustrous eyes ;

That ever and aye they are close to us,
  In the dark and the golden light ;
That they never have really gone away,
  But only have passed out of sight.

Suppose 'tis the old sweet tones that we hear,
  Instead of the zephyr's soft sighs ;
That the diamonds we see at night are not stars,
  But the light of their ever-bright eyes.

And suppose that wherever we walk or look,
  The dear ones we mourned for as dead
Walk side by side with us all the way
  With a silent, mysterious tread ;

That between this world and the realm of light
  Their feet ever come and go ;
That they minister still with a tender touch
  To the loved and the left below ;

That ever they watch and wait for the time
  When we too shall have spirit sight,
When their eager hands shall have drawn us through
  That curtain of quivering light.

Then a still more beautiful thought there came :
If the loved and the lost may come
To watch our feet with their spirit eyes
Wherever those feet may roam,

Then, surely, I know that the Father of all,
The Father of life and of light,
Who gave us the love that most we have loved,
Will keep us for ever in sight ;

That out from the stars and the winds and the seas,
Though the tempests may blacken the skies,
We may feel at all times the strong clasp of His hand,
Who shall wipe all the tears from our eyes.

We may hear the dear voice that shall whisper, "Well done,"
When the burdens of life are laid by ;
When we turn from the sin-shadowed beauty of earth
To the beauty that never shall die.

The Magpie's Song.

Through the gumtree's rustling branches
Falls the quivering silver light ;
All around are tones and whispers,
Murmuring voices of the night.

From the slender sheaoak needles
Sighs the spirit of the wind ;
As our hearts sigh in their sorrow
When the loved have been unkind.

Through the moonlight's silver stillness
Falls a subtle thrill of song ;
Breathed in tender notes of longing,
Faint and low, but sweet and long.

Trembling on the dewy silence,
Like some plaintive spirit-call,
Scarcely heard, but felt and cherished,
Still the soft notes rise and fall.

'Till about us, and around us,
All the air with sound is filled ;
And we feel some restless longings
In our natures touched and stilled.

Song of bird and moonlight's silver,
Heaven's own cords of love are ye ;
Drawing to the world we see not,
Through the world we feel and see.

Song.

Do you really love me, darling ?
Is you heart, then, all my own ?
Are the hopes that are the purest
Bound to me, and me alone ?

Do you really love me, darling ?
I have waited long for this ;
Waited as the blossoms wait, dear,
For the sun's first warming kiss.

Darling, there are lights and shadows,
Sunlight on the mountain's brow ;
Lurking shadows in the valleys,
Where the summer blossoms glow.

Love, the earth is full of beauty ;
Love, the days are fair and sweet ;
Crowded full of wealth and gladness,
Hours fleet by on golden feet.

Love, there is no gift like loving,
Purest pearl of life is this ;
Fairest bloom of earth's fair blossoms,
Pressed into one trembling kiss.

Do you really love me, darling ?
All the world is glad to-day ;
For the golden sun is shining—
All life's clouds have passed away.

Died Drunk.

(One morning a woman was found dead in a cell of the Police Station, Adelaide. She had died while in a state of intoxication.)

In the dead of the silent night,
When the stars were all glistening and bright,
When the streets of the city were hushed
'Neath the silence so solemn and deep,
That lay more like death than like sleep,
Where lately life's warm tide had rushed.

The mart and the warehouse were still,
And the great throbbing pulses that thrill
With the strong life of commerce and trade
Were still, 'neath the spell of the hour,
Bereft of their might and their power,
Like some ghost that enchantment has laid.

And down through the stillness of night,
Through the sky, that with stars was all white,
Came the angel of death and of doom ;
And his dark wings made darkness more deep,
As his touch changed the spirit of sleep
To death in that night's awful gloom.

Alone, with no loving hand nigh,
With none to receive her last sight,
Or to whisper one word of God's love—
That love that was meant for just such,
That love that had suffered so much
To bring them to glory above.

Would His grace not avail for this one
Who had died in that cell, and alone,
Forsaken by all of her kind ?
Let us pause, ere we close mercy's door
On the outcast, the wretched, and poor,
Remembering God's love is not blind.

She was cursed with earth's deadliest foe—
With the curse of the drink fiend, I know.
On her brow his foul stamp had been set,
His poison had withered life's flowers,
Had darkened its sunniest hours,
And had made her all honor forget.

In the slough she had dragged her fair name,
And her womanhood covered with shame,
A hissing and by-word had been ;
And the beauty God gave her was spoiled,
And the white of her soul was all soiled
With the stain of her horrible sin.

Yet the fairest who stands in God's sight,
Whose soul is most pure and most white,
May lie there and die, as she died ;
Alone with no love and no light,
Alone in the silence of night,
With no friendly face close at her side.

O ye sisters, I charge you, beware !
O ye daughters of earth, have a care,
Lest you fall by this very same cause !
For this cause has like issues in all,
From the hovel clear up to the hall ;
All natures are ruled by like laws.

The poison that marred her pure face
Will bring you to shame and disgrace
If you love its false sparkle as well.
The demon that crushed her to death
Will blast with his venomous breath
And kill with the power of his spell.

Every hope that has made your day bright,
And each prayer that has hallowed your night,
May be turned to a curse by his hand.
Then, daughters of earth, oh, beware !

And refuse to be trapped in the snare
That is blotting with crime our fair land.

And some woman, your sister, though now
Shame's dust lieth thick on her brow,
By the help of your hand may arise ;
And out of sin's filth and its mire
Her soul, washed and purged, may aspire
To a rest in God's glorious skies.

The Ecstasy of Living.

Oh, the ecstasy of living!
Oh the joy of drawing breath!
There is no such thing as dying,
There is no such word as death.

All the world is glad with beauty,
All the skies are fair and bright ;
All the hills are robed in glory,
Trimmed with green, and crowned with light.

Oh, those hills! how much I love them,
Rising proudly to the skies ;
Looking like the steps to heaven
To my weary, earth-worn eyes.

Oh, those hills! their rugged reaches
Softly whisper God's good name ;
Nay, they thunder forth "Jehovah!"
And the world's attention claim.

There they stand in all their grandeur,
Like the prophets of old time,
Lifted high above the human ;
Matchless, wonderful, sublime !

Ah ! but still we feel them kindred
When we see the fresh grass grow ;
When we see the bright-hued flower bells
On there stern cold bosoms blow.

Flowers that grow and bloom in beauty,
Decking with bright gems the sod ;
Smiling up from rock and hillside,
Like the promises of God.

For just so the good God-Father
Strews His blessings on life's way,
So that even roughest mountains
With the flowers of hope are gay.

Oh, ye hills ! ye grand old mountains,
Towering up toward the skies,
Draw by your majestic beauty
Up to God our weary eyes.

Oh, ye strong clear winds of heaven,
Rush and blow with all your might ;
Sweep our souls on your free pinions
To the land of life and light—

To the land where all are living,
Where they draw immortal breath ;
Where there comes no thought of dying,
Where there falls no shade of death.

Oh, the ecstasy of living
  Where eternal seas have met!
Where the darkness never falleth,
  Where the sun shall never set.

Oh, the ecstasy of living
  In a land beyond the skies!
Where the beauty is immortal,
  Where the glory never dies!

In the Long Ago.

Once, in the blissful long ago,
What happened? Would you like to know?
Ah! yes, I know you would quite well,
And yet --and yet I may not tell.

'Twas in the long ago, I say,
And yet it was but yesterday;
Or so it sometimes seems to me,
And sometimes an eternity.

But still, as we count time, I know
It was not very long ago;
And months, not years, must counted be
Since life's best sunshine gleamed for me.

Ah! well, I think that every heart
Holds in its secret, inmost part
Its sacred shrine, whereon is laid
Soul blossoms that can never fade—

Some secret none may share or know,
From out the blissful long ago.

Maybe a hope that died in tears,
A love that faded with the years ;
A joy too frail, too tender far,
To stand the world's rough jolt and jar.

A friendship, ah ! so sweet and pure,
We thought this surely must endure ;
We thought because our hearts were true,
That others needs must be so too.

Ah ! well—ah ! well, we hold them there,
Close hidden from the outer air ;
Our dear dead joys, our faded flowers,
That no eye sees but God's and ours.

But God does see them, and His hand,
Maybe, will plant our desert land--
Will bid white lilies blossom there,
And love's bright roses, sweet and fair.

And it may be that, at the last,
When all of life lies in the past,
And death has shown a world of bliss
To eyes that only wept in this,

God's hand may gently lead us where,
More sweet, more tender, and more fair,
Our dear dead hopes, our faded flowers,
Live, blossom in immortal bowers.
Ours for a glad eternity ;
God's love bounds all things—this may be.

What Have You Done?

Roses, what have you done to-day,
While the golden hours were floating past?
You are beautiful, crimson and creamy and white,
But your satin sweetness is fading fast.

"Weary and sad a maiden lay,
Longing for something fair to see,
When close to her side, in her dreary pain,
Still with our jewels crowned, came we.

"A kiss and roses together were laid,
In love and sweetness, on cheek and brow;
The day is over, our work is done—
What matter if we are fading now?"

Violets, what have you done to-day?
Daisies, with pink-fringed solemn eyes,
What is the work you have found to do
While the bright sun laughed in the cloudless skies

"Down where nobody thought to look,
Hidden away in the quiet shade,
We blossomed in crowds that never were seen—
But the air was sweet with the scent we made."

The daisy folded her pink-tipped lids
With a little sigh for the day that was dead:
"Very lowly my lot has been,
But I smiled on all that I saw," she said.

Beautiful blossoms all over the earth,
  Scattered so freely by God's good hand,
Always doing your beautiful best,
  Just in the place where you always stand.

It may be only a smile of love,
  It may be only a scented breeze
Stealing the heat from the summer day,
  Kissing the leaves of the fainting trees.

It may be to lighten some burden of care,
  Some chamber of sorrow and pain to cheer ;
But never a blossom is idle found
  From first to last of the golden year—

For God to each flower some task has given,
  Some beautiful labor of love to do ;
And nothing, of all, is found undone
  When the shining hours of the day are through.

What does it matter how lowly the task
  If the end of the day shall find it done ?
If the Master's smile is the blest reward—
  The Master's smile, and the rest well won ?

Fame and Women.

Could ever fame be all to me,
  Or fill my soul with joy and peace,

Its laurels satisfy my heart,
Or bid its restless longing cease ?

Perhaps it might if I could find
For every loving thought a grave ;
Could kill my heart or drown my soul
'Neath fabled Lethe's dreamless wave.

But never until then will fame
Hold all of good my heart desires ;
As well might one expect to feed
With floods of water Etna's fires.

Nay, give me love—one gentle word,
One touch from lips that love me well,
Would make my heart like glad birds sing,
My soul with purest rapture swell.

Without this, life were dark to me—
I care not what it held beside ;
But having this my heart were bright,
My spirit glad whate'er betide.

Feed flame with oil, give rain to flowers,
Give each grass-blade its dewdrop rare ;
But, oh ! to woman's heart give love—
That only fills the longing there.

Aye, give me wealth, or fame or power,
All good with which life can be blest ;
But from my heart earth's holiest gift
Keep, and I care not for the rest.

Minor Keys.

When the wild wind storm of music
  Sweeps through choir and pillar'd aisle,
And the very air around us
  Seems to palpitate the while—

When the full, triumphant chorus
  Peels from roof to floor around,
Each grand swell or softer cadence
  Blent in waves of silver sound,

Bend your ear a little closer:
  Listen to the undertone
Running through the whole glad chorus
  With a low half-sobbing moan,

Like some soul in anguish mortal—
  Listen to its cry again;
Heard, though low, yet how distinctly,
  Like a spirit-wail of pain.

It is nothing but the music
  Of the lower, minor keys,
Yet how great, how wide the difference
  In the glad joy notes and these.

Yet all music has its minors,
  Each sweet song its undertone;
Nothing would be wholly perfect
  Played in glad joy notes alone.

So no life can be all sunshine;
  So some storms must ever rise,
If we would be truly happy,
  If we would have brightest skies.

Like the minor keys of music,
  Sorrows make our lives more sweet ;
And the undertone of sadness
  Makes our song of life complete.

When beyond this world of sorrow
  We shall join the white-robed throng ;
When our voices, tuned to gladness,
  Join heaven's grand triumphant song—

There, where sadness never enters,
  There will be no undertone ;
Life's best chords in heaven shall never
  Answer to life's spirit-moan.

Yet, I think, when all is gladness,
  When the name of pain shall cease,
We will bless our God for sorrow,
  Thank Him for life's minor keys.

Harry, Boy.

Harry, boy !
With your everlasting play,
Bright as noontide summer's day,
Seeing nothing but the light,
Never thinking of the night,

O I will pray for thee, love,
In the glow of the sunlit hours,
When the burning rays of the noontide
Are kissing the pale sweet flowers;
When the sun is high in the heaven,
And flames on his throne of light;
Ere yet the lengthening shadows
Shall speak of the coming night,
I will pray for thee.

O I will pray for thee, love,
At eve when the dewdrops fall,
When the still grey shades of twilight
Creep over the mountains tall;
When the stars come out in the heavens,
And silently one by one
Take up their quiet vigil
In the track of the setting sun,
I will pray for thee.

O I will pray for thee, love,
In the solemn hours of the night
When the breathing silence around me
Proclaims God's power and might;
Whenever my heart shall whisper
The name that it love's the best,
I will pray that God's richest blessings
On thee, my love, may rest.
I will pray for thee.

Illusions.

Across the pathway of my life there shone
A golden ray,
And clouds and gloom and darkness at its gleam
Fled all away.

I grasped and held it in my trembling hands
So lovingly,
For in the sunbeam's glory life had grown
All fair to me.

And then it changed and seemed a lovely flower,
So bright so sweet,
That I thanked God that aught so beautiful
Mine eyes should greet,

But to my seeing still the treasure changed,
And seemed to be
Life's fruitage perfected, the richest growth
On Time's full tree.

Once more it changed, and in my hand methought
I held a gem
Whose lustre paled the rarest jewel on
Night's diadem.

I called my treasure Friendship, and I made,
Deep in my heart,
A secret shrine, and hid my treasure there,
Sacred, apart.

And day and night glad lips that quivered so
Gave thanks to God
For the rich wealth of beauty that had blessed
The path I trod.

Illusions all ; my visions all are fled ;
I stand alone ;
And over all the beauty that I dreamed
I make no moan.

Within my empty, trembling hands I hold
No treasure rare,
But only dust and ashes ; and Hope's death
Weights the still air.

The Wonderful Sea.

O THE wonderful, wonderful sea !
O the shimmering, emerald sea !
Sometimes calm as a sapphire lake,
Sometimes crested with wavelets, that break
In silvery rushes of rippling glee.

O the wonderful, wonderful sea !
Ever sounding mysteriously,
Wrought into rage by the storm-king's fist,
Whelming in terror and death, I wist,
Many a gallant argosy.

O the wonderful, wonderful sea!
Solemn unfathomed mystery.
Down in the depths, where the winds never play,
Where the sunlight lieth the livelong day,
Strange that such calmness should ever be.

Ever and ever, though storms beat high,
And the thunders bellow along the sky;
Though the wild waves leap with a deafening roar,
Though wrecks are scattered along the shore,
And white, dead, up-turned faces lie.

Still down in the depths the starfish shines,
And the rosy coral, and sea-weed vines
Lie in a calmness that never is broken,
That stands for all time as a sign and token,
A symbol of truth that is most divine.

O the wonderful, wonderful sea!
Thus should our human spirits be:
Through ripple of laughter, and gust of grief,
Through tempests of anguish, violent, and brief,
Though death and destruction our eyes may see.

Still, far down in our natures deep,
Where all our best and our holiest sleep,
We should be like the ocean, calm and still,
And a better thought, and a nobler will,
Should ever our spirits in quiet keep.

O the wonderful, wonderful sea!
Thus should our hearts' love ever be;

Steadfast and true, as the God of Truth,
Calm and unchanging through wrong and ruth ;
Faithful and loyal eternally.

Ever holding, through passion's strife,
Down, deep down in our inner life ;
All the stars and blossoms of earth,
All the gladness which hope giveth birth,
The beauty with which existence is rife.

I Cannot Reach You.

I CANNOT reach you, darling,
Though I stretch my eager hand ;
My trembling fingers cannot grasp
The glory where you stand.

I cannot see you, darling,
Though I strain my longing eyes ;
Their weary gazing cannot pierce
The soft depths of yon skies.

I cannot hear the music
That your ears forever hear—
Strains of such melody ne'er fall
On any mortal ear.

I cannot see the sunlight
That is showered in floods of gold

Upon those fair celestial plains
Where beauty ne'er grows old.

I cannot see the glory
Of that sea of fire and glass,
Above whose waves of glittering sheen
White pinioned seraphs pass.

I cannot see the splendor
Of the golden city's light;
I know not of the radiant day
Where falls no gloom of night.

But I know they hold you, darling,
And I know the day will come
When I shall once more clasp your hand
In that glad stainless home.

So I wait in patience, darling,
Till I hear the welcome word—
Till I see you face to face once more
In the glory of the Lord.

The Day has been Weary.

The day has been very weary,
Weary and long I think;
I have watched the golden hours slip down,
Link after shining link.

Drop down in eternity's ocean—
The fathomless time gone by,
Where all the hopes of the buried past
Dead and forgotten lie.

The day has been very weary,
But the sunset hour is nigh ;
And a splendor that noontide never has seen
Flushes the glowing sky,
And the evening star is lying
At rest on a field of light ;
Like a promise of calm and peace to come
In the silence of the night.

The day has been very weary,
But the twilight shadows fall,
And through the tree-top's whispering leaves
The soft night voices call ;
And a shower of crystal diamonds
Rains on the thirsty flowers ;
They have waited in patience for this sweet time
Through all the day's long hours.

The day has been very weary,
But the night has come at last,
And all the griefs that darkened the light
Are laid with the hours that are past.
The day has been very weary,
But the lamps are lit in the sky,
And I wait in patience beneath their shine
For the waking by-and-bye.

Farewell, My Love.

FAREWELL, my love! The evening shades are falling
Across the grassy meadows cool and green;
I hear the faint, sweet bird-notes softly whispered
Like vesper prayers from every leafy screen,
And through the still grey curtains of the twilight
Are not some star gems slowly stealing out,
Flashing like diamonds, till the sky above us
Is girt with radiant glory round about?

What say you, love?—the sun is shining brightly,
There is no shadow on the light of day,
The noontide glory lies in golden splendor,
The pearly dew has scarcely passed away;
That in the fields the gold and crimson blossoms
Are kissed to rapture by the soft wind's breath;
That all the world is full of life and beauty—
And yet all life, all beauty, leads to death?

Farewell, dear love! The midnight lamps are burning,
Lit by God's hand for love to you and me,
That, by their wondrous glory led and guided,
Our weary eyes a goodlier light may see.
A solemn silence rests upon all nature;
Each wave of sound is hushed, each voice is still;
I hear no more the sighing of the breezes,
Nor the soft tinkle of the silver rill.

What, love?—you say as yet 'tis only evening,
As yet the birds have hardly gone to sleep;
That winds are sweeping through the waving branches,

Down by the fountains where the lilies weep?
Why is it that I cannot see you, darling?
Is it because the evening shadows fall?
Nay, for a denser darkness rests upon me,
And silence, still and deep, broods over all.

Good morning, love! The eastern skies are bright'ning;
There dawns the promise of a splendid day;
Aurora's blush has flushed the clouds to crimson
And scared the midnight shadows all away.
I hear a burst of music through the treetops,
An anthem worthy of this glorious morn
When from the darkness of the awful midnight
A fresh sweet world has just been newly born.

Love, you are sobbing! Lay your head beside me,
So; hold me fast in one long, close embrace.
Love, you are near me, I can feel your kisses;
'Tis light, and yet I cannot see your face.
Ah! is it so? and those are angel voices,
And not bird-anthems falling on my ear.
God sends a cohort of bright, deathless spirits,
My passage through the gloomy vale to cheer.

Good morning, love! with me 'tis night no longer;
For me has ceased all discord and all strife.
One thought, born of the light, I leave behind me—
Love, rest in peace, death does but lead to life.
Think not of me as dead, perhaps forgetting,
But living, loving, in the eternal home,
From whose dear shelter I shall watch to greet you.
Good morning, love! Behold the day has come.

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